



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton distributes 12,000 meals to Beat the COVID-19 Blues

Oakville, Ont., March 31, 2021 - The Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCAH) has announced it has distributed more than 12,000 meals for Halton community members as part of their Beat the COVID-19 Blues program from October 2020 to March 2021.

The Beat the COVID-19 Blues program provided vulnerable populations living in Halton with meals and hours of online musical entertainment as well as virtual Caribbean cooking classes. The program was funded in part by the Oakville Community Foundation's Charity-Small Business Partnership program, the Emergency Community Support Fund - by way of the Oakville Community Foundation and Community Foundation of Halton North - and the New Horizons for Seniors program, funded by the Government of Canada.

Alongside the 12,000 meals, CCAH also distributed 40,000 surgical-grade masks, 200 kids packs including colouring books and activities and 3,000 grocery food bags donated by Food For Life. Volunteer drivers from all throughout Halton worked for 25 weeks to deliver meals to vulnerable populations and seniors.

Chef Melani Bastians dedicated hundreds of hours to prepare meals and her restaurant, Caribbean Vibes in Milton, was the Milton distribution point. The Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre in Oakville served as the other distribution point with the help of many community volunteers.

The accompanying online entertainment features professional artists and performers in Caribbean and African music traditions as well as Caribbean cooking classes. Sheridan College Alumni Akil McKenzie captured these performances, some of which were featured on the CCAH Christmas broadcast on Cogeco and can be viewed on their [Youtube page](#).

"We'd like to thank all of the volunteers and partners who have contributed to the Beat the COVID-19 Blues program and made it a success," said Andrew Tyrrell, president of the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton. "This program has made it possible to connect with and enhance the quality of life of our community members through food and entertainment."

This was the second iteration of the Beat the COVID-19 Blues program after a successful first round in 2020. With support from the Emergency Community Support Fund, the program was able to provide 2,020 meals to vulnerable populations as well as more than 10 hours of online entertainment.

CCAH is celebrating the success of the program on April 3 at the Queen Elizabeth Community and Cultural Centre with a drive-thru curbside pick-up barbecue, to thank volunteers and supporters of the program.

“Canadians across the country are facing unique challenges during the pandemic, particularly those who are most vulnerable to the health, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19. For many Canadians who were already struggling, it’s even harder now, and they are turning more and more to charities and non-profit organizations for help. To ease that burden, our government created the Emergency Community Support Fund to ensure local community organizations like the Oakville Community Foundation and Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton could adapt and increase frontline services and supports for vulnerable Canadians during COVID-19. I am thrilled with the success of the Beat the COVID-19 Blues program in providing meals, protective equipment and entertainment to our neighbours over the last five months.” - Hon. Pam Damoff, Member of Parliament for Oakville North-Burlington

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations. With the support of federal funding programs, including the Emergency Community Support Fund and New Horizons for Seniors program, the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCAH) has continued to offer significant supports to vulnerable people within our community. Thank you so much to the CCAH for its remarkable work in distributing more than 12,000 meals and keeping our community connected during this time." - Hon. Anita Anand, Member of Parliament, Oakville

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Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton

Founded in 1977 as a non-profit organization, the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCAH) has since gained charitable status. The organization provides a number of award-winning programs that promote awareness around how diversity, full and active civic participation, unbiased inclusion, and the capacity to value differences are essential to the social, cultural, and economic growth of the Halton Region. The foundation of its programs are the four pillars Culture, Community, Education and Harmony

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